

Annex A

Community Wellbeing Board General Update – November 2021

Appropriate Adults

1. There are ongoing discussions with members of the National Oversight Group considering how best to engage strategic and corporate local government over the remaining 22 months of the project. This includes continuing to highlight statutory responsibilities and ensuring corporate ownership by local authorities. It continues to be a challenging area of work with Appropriate Adult services historically and currently operating on the periphery of health and social care provision with local oversight and governance arrangements at various stages of development.
2. The Scottish Appropriate Adult Network (SAAN), the current representation of local authorities at an operational level, has temporarily withdrawn from attending National Oversight Group meetings whilst they undergo change management work supported by the Improvement Service.
3. The National Co-ordinator is working closely with the Care Inspectorate to establish a short life working group on quality assurance, focusing on supporting services and local authorities to prepare for self-evaluation.
4. Further developments include raising awareness of the role and remit of Appropriate Adult services, building relationships with wider stakeholders and partners, leading on working groups and the National Training Programme project and supporting the development of local oversight arrangements as well as a national practitioner forum.

Winter Pressures (Flexible Funding) for Councils

5. At the end of October, the Scottish Government announced a £41 million Winter Support Fund to support low income households. This will include £25 million in flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity.
6. This is in response to the concurrent pressure arising from the loss of key pandemic supports such as the Universal Credit uplift and furlough scheme, alongside increasing living costs and the anticipated increase in household financial insecurity over the Winter of 2021-22. The allocation of flexible funding is to enable local authorities to respond to emerging needs.
7. This builds on £70 million flexible funding provided over 2020-21 to tackle financial insecurity and provide assistance with food and fuel costs. A report of activities, trends and learning following this funding was circulated to local officers in June 2021 and is available online: [Local action to tackle food insecurity: summary of activities, trends and learning - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/circular-letters/2021/06/2021-06-23-local-action-to-tackle-food-insecurity-summary-of-activities-trends-and-learning-gov.scot)
8. Scottish Government and COSLA officials have met to discuss the £25 million allocation. Further details will be provided to the Settlement and Distribution Group on 17 November. National guidance to assist delivery will be published and will contain a strong steer in favour of cash-first responses, in line with the SG's draft national plan on ending the need for food banks as a primary response to hardship.
9. As with last year, Scottish Government officials will continue to be available to discuss delivery as needed. Please do contact them at foodinsecurityteam@gov.scot if it would be helpful to speak.

Affordable Housing Supply Programme

10. The Cabinet Secretary wrote to COSLA and members of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme Benchmark Investment Review Group on 29 October setting out the new benchmarks as well as the intention to make the use of Scotland's Housing Network's 'Value for Money in New Affordable Homes Tool', and housing association participation in a programme of procurement support a condition of grant. There is still a significant differential between RSL and LA benchmarks, though it is less than it was.
11. This is counter to the position agreed by COSLA Leaders in August. Leaders had agreed that there was no evidence to support ongoing disparity between LA and RSL benchmarks, and that this would disproportionately affect council tenants. They also agreed that mandating participation in a specific continuous improvement was not appropriate. The letter will therefore go back to Leaders for further consideration. In the interim, Members are asked to note the Cabinet Secretary's position that "Benchmarks are not therefore grant rates or grant ceilings" therefore projects should seek the level of investment from Scottish Government that is required to ensure rents are affordable.
12. The Board may also want to note that the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee set out their concerns about the financial viability of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme in [a recent letter to the Deputy First Minister](#).

Housing issues

13. Following discussions between COSLA officers and ALACHO, the COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government to raise the issues facing local authorities which are impacting on all aspects of housing and homelessness service delivery. These include the well documented rising prices and delivery times for some key materials including timber, electrical goods, windows and cement which are now impacting on the ability of landlords to prepare void properties for reletting. Recent tender returns for developments in central Scotland have shown prices of close to £200k per home and substantially above this in rural and island communities.
14. In addition, at least six councils and a number of housing associations have had agreements with utility companies unilaterally withdrawn or suspended. These cover for power supplies to empty properties, and essential works prior to new tenants moving in. This is a significant concern and causing interruption and delay in the system.
15. Likely consequences of these issues are that projects planned as part of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme will face delays and be subject to higher than anticipated costs, and an impact on both the numbers and length of stay in temporary accommodation as void properties cannot be re-let until necessary repairs and upgrades are made.

No Recourse to Public Funds – homelessness and rough sleeping

16. Councillor Parry will meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government on November 11 to agree a joint approach to the provision of support for people with NRPF who are at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping. COSLA is seeking a co-ordinated plan to implement necessary support over the next few months, particularly to provide temporary emergency accommodation to adults with NRPF, where local authorities consider it appropriate to do so under public health legislation / to prevent a public health risk. An oral update will be provided detailing outcomes from the meeting.

Short Term Lets

17. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government wrote to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee in October setting out the Scottish Government's proposed changes to the plans in relation to the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Short-term Lets) Order 2021. These changes undermine one of the main purposes of the licensing plans – ensuring safety. The proposals also set out the intention to provide “stronger guidance on fees” and considerations around “specifying an average fee in guidance which licensing authorities should not exceed”. It is unclear how an average fee could be calculated prior to all local authorities considering the costs associated with their schemes, given that revenue raised from licence fees is required to be fully cost recovering, and it is for Local Government to decide on the specifics of their own local schemes and costs. These points were made to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government and shared with the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee.

Prevention Review Group – consultation

18. The Homelessness Prevention Review Group published recommendations earlier in the year. The Community Wellbeing Board received and commented on these prior to publication, and were broadly supportive of the direction of travel. Scottish Government intend to consult on the proposals around a Homelessness Prevention Duty and have asked COSLA to jointly consider the responses. The consultation will be published later in the year and Members will have the opportunity to respond to the consultation and consider the responses from wider stakeholders.

Rented Sector Strategy - consultation

19. The Rented Sector Strategy consultation (as announced in [the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-22](#)) is anticipated to be published by the end of the year. The COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson is meeting The Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, Mr Harvie MSP, later in the month to discuss this in more detail.

National Community Justice Strategy (Refresh)

20. The Scottish Govt have been consulting as a first stage on the refresh of the [National Strategy for Community Justice](#) as the current model for Community Justice came into operation in April, 2017. This will be followed by a wider consultation as part of the development of a new strategy early next year.

21. Following this review, Scottish Govt have committed to developing a new strategy, and it is expected that this will be published in Spring 2022 after a public consultation exercise. The targeted consultation forms part of the engagement exercise for the review of the strategy.

22. A number of local authorities have participated in workshops on the first stage of the strategy consultation. Feedback from local authorities reflected a need to improve and enhance the current strategy to reflect the current context. In addition, it was reflected that there is a need to make the strategy more digestible and accessible, particularly to stakeholders not directly involved in community justice but have an interest. It was also reflected that the strategy should build upon achievements in community justice in recent years.

23. Further, local authorities have outlined the need for sufficient funding on pandemic recovery and funding, given the backlog of cases sitting with the Courts and due to staff still not back to working as they were pre-pandemic.

Bail and Release Consultation

24. In furthering commitments contained in the programme for governance COSLA officials understand the Scottish Gvt intend to publish a consultation on changes to Bail and Release conditions to reduce the use of prisons where it is safe to do so. The consultation is expected on Friday 5 November. As a result, local authorities will be encouraged to respond and to share their responses with COSLA. As further details emerge they will be shared with COSLA member authorities.

New Fire Framework for Scotland

25. The Scottish Govt are currently undertaking a consultation on the Fire and Rescue Framework till 22 December. It is accessible at the following weblink:- <https://consult.gov.scot/safer-communities/fire-and-rescue-framework>.
26. 'The Framework' sets out 7 strategic priorities for SFRS which are outcome focused. Many of the priorities are overarching and are relevant to several aspects of SFRS's role. The 7 strategic priorities for SFRS are prevention and protection, addressing risk, innovation and modernisation, climate change, effective governance and performance, fair work employer and partnership working.
27. Governance and accountability should play a key role in the Framework for SFRS. As with Police arrangements, the Fire and Rescue Service's local and national scrutiny structures continue to develop. It will be important that the future Framework benefits local work or relationships in local areas, given elected members have a scrutiny role over local fire plans and that councils lead on other aspects of community safety.
28. Further, partnership working has to be embedded through SFRS's business as part of any transformation by building on existing partnerships with other local service providers. The SFRS will also require to continually review and look at innovative ways to work together to identify and improved shared outcomes for local communities. It will be also be important to emphasise any local concerns regarding issues relating to response times.
29. Local authorities are encouraged to respond to the consultation by 22 December and to share their responses with COSLA by early December, 2021.

Gambling Harm and Compliance

30. Members of the Board will be aware from previous briefings that gambling harm does not just have a serious impact on individuals, but also other family members, friends and work colleagues. Young people are also particularly affected by gambling harm caused by their parents or from their own gambling.
31. Since the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, problem gambling appears to have become even more prevalent in Scotland's local communities as a hidden issue. This is due to the fact that more people are now engaged in online gambling according to the Gambling Commission.
32. Earlier in June, 2021, four local authorities namely Glasgow City, South Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway Councils agreed to participate in gambling harm and compliance pilots with the support of the Gambling Commission and Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS). The objectives of the pilots are:-

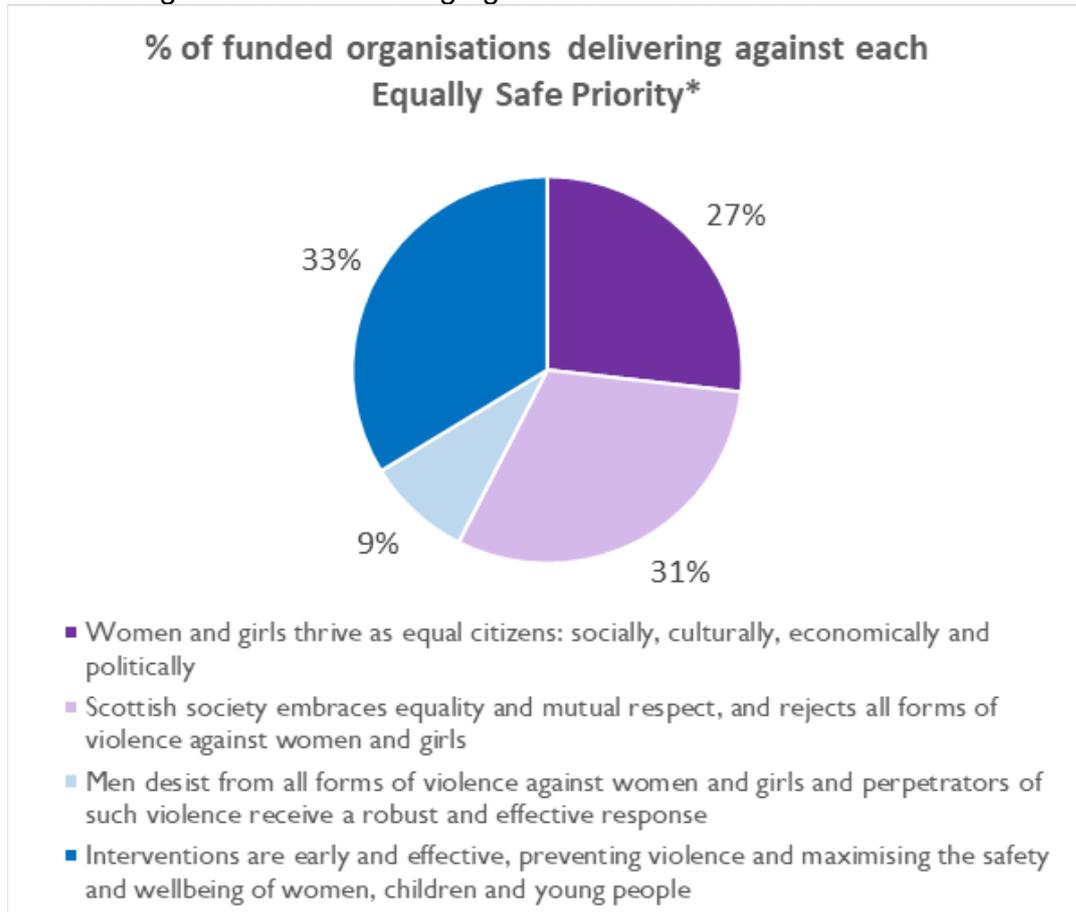
- To provide training and support to address gambling harm within the workforces of the 4 local authorities via internal HR and Wellbeing staff.
 - To promote better compliance with the Gambling Act (2005) in the 4 local authority areas.
33. Two virtual seminars have been hosted by COSLA and SOLACE on 7 September and 2 November with the 4 local authorities and partners that have agreed to participate in the pilots. A strategic Project Implementation Document(PID) to help take forward the work of the four pilot local authorities and partners has been provided by COSLA. The aim is to have the pilots completed by December, 2021 with an evaluation early next year of them.
 34. Positive and encouraging progress has been made by all four pilot local authorities with each pilot area developing their own approach that in some areas involves member/officer groups, as well as various different partner agencies.
 35. In East Ayrshire Council, the primary focus of their pilot has been around training and raising awareness on gambling harm with around 100 staff from the local authority and partners involved in workshops. Officers have also been involved in compliance visits as part of the pilot with the Gambling Commission. In addition, there has been local elected member involvement of the pilot with an oversight group to drive the work forward.
 36. At the South Lanarkshire Council pilot, training sessions with CAS have recently commenced. Participants have been invited to enrol from various teams within the local authority. Once the training has been reviewed by the local authority, consideration may be given to using a 'train the trainer' model. The local authority also has undertaken accompanied visits with the Gambling Commission on compliance activities. In addition, the pilot is to receive the consideration of the local authority's Corporate Management Team.
 37. Dumfries and Galloway Council have established an officer working group and are working with partners to establish a focus on young people with Education, Social Work and Youth Services. The local authority is also exploring potential links with Forward Scotland to consider how young people can be engaged. In addition, the Gambling Commission have undertaken 18 pilot visits in Dumfries and Galloway Council area.
 38. Glasgow City Council have initiated work on their pilot through the establishment of a member-officer group and are also exploring links with Trade Unions. In addition, Glasgow City Council supported by Public Health Scotland and the Gambling Commission as a separate but related activity to the pilot, held a virtual Gambling Summit on 13 and 14 September that brought together people with lived experience of gambling harms with experts in practice, research and policy to share knowledge and insights on tackling gambling harms. This proved to be a successful and worthwhile event.
 39. The summit, which had over 200 people registered to attend over the two days, was the starting point for the development of a strategy to address gambling harms in the city, as a public health issue. The summit took place online and included keynote addresses by national and local political leaders and experts by experience, as well as those with practical and research experience of preventing and treating gambling harms.
 40. After the pilots have been completed an evaluation will be conducted with the support of ScotPHN and Public Health Scotland. COSLA will assist in this work to identify some of the broad parameters of the evaluation.

Delivering Equally Safe (DES) Funding

41. Further details have now been made available by the Scottish Government on the allocations made through the Delivering Equally Safe Fund (DES) managed by 'Inspiring Scotland'. This funding is to be invested in projects and programmes of work across

Scotland until the end of September 2023. It is the means through which the 5 intended outcomes of the Equally Safe Strategy will be delivered.

- 42. A Delivering Equally Safe Programme Summary is available for your information. See Item 2.1c Board workplan update
- 43. In summary, 121 different projects were funded which will be delivered by 112 organisations.
- 44. % of funded organisations delivering against each outcome are:



COSLA 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence Campaign 2021

- 45. COSLA will mark the United Nations annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence Campaign from the 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, until 10 December, Human Rights Day.
- 46. Working in partnership with the Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland, COSLA will demonstrate support for Councils/Violence Against Women Partnerships (VAWPs) 16 Days activity by:-
 - reflecting the VAWPs agreed themes for this year's national and local activity #LightUp and #WhatWillYouDo.
 - an intended participation in 'lighting up' (via LED) Verity House on the evenings of the 25th November and the 10th of December – pending COVID safety compliance and EIA.
 - aligning Spokesperson's social media messaging with agreed VAWP themes and visual messaging during 16 Days
 - Hosting a national Flagship summit on VAWG on the 10th December 2021 (International Human Rights Day) to showcase learning from the local summits that have taken place across Scotland between 25th of November and 10th of December developed by VAWPs.

The Summit will explore and identify key issues where collective leadership to tackle the prevalence of gender based violence in all its forms and in public and private space, between local and national spheres of Government is required

47. The National Violence Against Women Network have developed a toolkit of resources to add value to local 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaigns across Scotland. This toolkit supports a number of activities which can be progressed locally and nationally to maximise the impact of this year's campaign and is available on the Improvement Service website. To access the toolkit, [please visit this page](#).
48. A calendar of 16 DAY events taking place across the country is also being constructed and will be available throughout the period via the [Improvement Service](#) 16 Days Page.

Workforce Development: Gender Competence and Confidence in Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

49. Scottish Women's Aid has launched a new framework to encourage the Scottish workforce to change the cultures that allow gender inequalities to continue, and to be better equipped to identify behaviours through their work roles that could signal that someone is at risk from domestic abuse.
50. [Equally Safe in Practice](#) (ESiP) training and resources, including a short animation '[Out of the Box – Together for Gender Equality](#)', will provide a comprehensive range of supports to help employees understand gender inequality and its links to sexual violence, domestic abuse and women's inequality in daily life, while providing opportunities to implement this knowledge through their workplace.
51. A pilot scheme for the Equally Safe in Practice (ESiP) programme is being launched first in eight local authorities and thereafter will be available to all local authorities and other public bodies.

Scottish Government and COSLA Roundtable on Restorative Justice in the context of Domestic Abuse and other forms of Gender Based Violence

52. [The Scottish Government's Restorative Justice Action Plan](#) sets out the Scottish Government's vision for Restorative Justice services to be widely available across Scotland by 2023, available to anyone who wishes to access them, and at a time that is appropriate to the people and case involved. The Plan notes the importance of such services being consistent, evidence-led, trauma informed and of a high standard and highlights the need for strong leadership, commitment, and meaningful collaboration between national and local partners to ensure this happens.
53. The National Violence Against Women Network and Scottish Women's Aid have raised concerns that wider collaboration with professionals working across the violence against women sector would be beneficial in taking the Plan forward in a more robustly considered way in respect to Restorative Justice in the context of Domestic Abuse and other forms of Gender based Violence.
54. A roundtable discussion to consider the safe development of Restorative Justice services for women who have experienced domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence, co-chaired by COSLA and the Scottish Government has now been agreed and will be held on the 22nd November. It aims to:
55. Raise awareness of the aims and associated work currently being progressed through the Restorative Justice Action Plan and Equally Safe Delivery Plan ;

56. Explore potential benefits and risks that engagement with restorative justice processes may have for women who have experienced domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence; and
57. Identify actions and next steps required to ensure that a collaborative approach is taken to supporting the implementation of the Restorative Justice Action Plan, underpinned by a shared commitment by all partners to promote the safety and wellbeing of victims/ survivors of all forms of gender-based violence.

Developing a Support Model for Women engaged in CSE including Prostitution

58. On the 9th of September Cllr Parry chaired a Roundtable event with ENCOMPASS to consider next steps towards the development of a Support Model for Women Involved in Selling or Exchanging Sex. The participants considered recommendations the ENCOMPASS Network 2021 Report 'Exiting Prostitution; What Next' and the recommendations from COSLA's Short-Term Working Group on CSE directed by COSLA Leaders at the outset of the Pandemic.
59. As the recommendations have been robustly informed by women with lived experience Cllr Parry will discuss the next steps identified at this event with the Minister for Community Safety who is currently developing a national legislative model to challenge men's demand for prostitution, that includes the scoping of services to support women. Cllr Parry will seek to ensure that the work undertaken over a number of years to ensure women's voice sits at the heart of service development in this context is informed by this work, as well as the Scottish Government's intended new phase of consultation with women engaged in the selling and exchanging of sex.

Participatory Budgeting 2020/21 Progress Report

60. In August 2021, members were asked to provide pro-forma returns outlining progress towards the Community Choices 1% Framework Agreement for Participatory Budgeting for the 2020/21 financial year. The draft progress report (Appendix d) outlines council progress to date on their mainstream PB work providing aggregate figures which will be reported to Scottish Government. Members are asked to review the report and COSLA officers are happy to provide further information.

Child Disability Payment (CDP) National Rollout

61. Following on from the Board's approval in September of an update report, the consideration by SDG and subsequent approval by COSLA Leaders of Social Security Scotland's funding proposal, Child Disability Payment, (CDP) national rollout will commence on 22 November 2021. This will see Councils stand up 'Front Door' teams to administer a supporting information process which will facilitate an information transfer between Local Government professionals and Social Security Scotland Case Managers.
62. Once the CDP rollout is underway, the national rollout of Adult Disability Benefit, (ADP) will take place in Spring 2022. Further reports to facilitate official and political governance will be brought to CWB in due course and COSLA officers will continue to work with Social Security Scotland, Local Authorities and Digital Office to scope data-sharing requirement for ADP, including arrangements to support Local Government's ongoing administration of statutory passported welfare/benefits/reliefs.

Elected Member Safety

63. Following the death of Sir David Amess MP in October, there has understandably been much concern amongst Councillors about their personal safety, especially when holding ward surgeries. Police Scotland held a series of online safety and security briefings that were open to all Scottish elected members last week. These were attended by many of Councillors, but by no means all.
64. Following these sessions, an email from Assistant Chief Constable Pat Campbell was sent out to all elected members with links to official guidance and advice on personal safety and security. Police Scotland were also intending to send out a further email with a summary of questions and answers that arose during the online briefings.
65. COSLA officials are continuing to work with Police Scotland to ensure that the specific safety concerns of Councillors are addressed, including the possibility of organising local authority-based sessions with Local Area Commanders. Officials are interested in working up proposals that could be taken forward to deliver a rapid response from the police to emergency calls made by all elected members.
66. In order to understand the degree of the problem and respond to elected members concerns COSLA's president has reiterated the message from Police Scotland to contact 101 if you have any concerns (or 999 in an emergency). This will ensure that all information is logged. This will be more effective in this regard than emailing named police officers.

Hong Kong BN(O) Visa Route

67. Members of the Board will be aware of the ongoing work around the new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa Route, following the approval of our Hong Kong BN(O) Strategy in September. This project aims to support the integration of arrivals from Hong Kong through the creation of an [online Welcome Hub](#) with both English and Cantonese versions to ensure accessibility. Data will also be collected to maintain visibility on where in Scotland Hong Kong arrivals are settling, in order to provide capacity-building support for local authorities. This will ensure local authorities are able to support the integration of new arrivals from Hong Kong. Other components of the strategy are now moving forward at pace: the establishment of casework support to councils, the creation of a Hong Kong Sounding Board, outreach to local authorities, and liaison with Scottish and UK Government.
68. With a newly recruited Policy and Participation Officer now in post, both Local Authorities and BN(O) migrants will be able to contact our Welcome Hub by emailing hongkongBNO@cosla.gov.uk.

Accommodation for destitute asylum seekers

69. The Board will be aware that in October 2021 Leaders discussed the changing situation in relation to asylum accommodation in Scotland, with the Home Office seeking to source contingency hotel accommodation outside of Glasgow for destitute asylum seekers. Scottish Local Government remains fully committed to supporting the UK's humanitarian efforts. This is illustrated by our unanimous and ongoing support for UK resettlement programmes and unaccompanied asylum seeking children, while Glasgow City Council has, for over twenty years, supported asylum dispersal in the city. Indeed, Glasgow remains by a considerable margin the largest host authority for asylum applicants in the UK. However, both Glasgow City Council and Scottish Local Government as a whole have been clear and unambiguous in our opposition to the current approach around asylum dispersal. While the principle of enabling people to be settled in communities across the UK is one that we support, the lack of any form of financial support for participating councils, or sufficient wrap around support for those being accommodated, is unsustainable and has inhibited efforts to broaden participation in asylum dispersal, both in Scotland and the UK more broadly.

70. Despite the serious concerns being raised by the local authority concerned, Glasgow City Council and COSLA, an Initial Accommodation contingency hotel has been established outside of Glasgow. COSLA and local authority staff are working with Mears and the Home Office at an operational level to ensure that the hotel is operating safely.
71. Given the urgency of this situation, both Cllr Parry and Cllr Evison have written to the Home Secretary seeking urgent and meaningful engagement, both with affected councils and at a national level, to seek to develop an approach whereby UK Government engages in genuine partnership discussions as to the best means of accommodating people who are seeking asylum. Cllrs Parry and Evison were clear in their correspondence that enforcing an approach without meaningful discussion and without the requisite resources in place is not in the best interests of the asylum applicants or the communities where they will be residing
72. Leaders agreed that COSLA maintains its position in opposition to the use of hotels as asylum contingency accommodation and agreed that COSLA continues to press for meaningful partnership working and sufficient funding to support councils' role in the UK's asylum dispersal programme.